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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Dec. 7, 1864.—Laid on
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[By the CHAIR.]

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, V.A., Dec. 6, 1864.

To the House of Representatives:

In response to your resolution of the 23d ultimo, I herewith transmit a communication from the Secretary of War, which conveys the information requested relative to the arrangements which have been made "for the relief of our soldiers who are prisoners of war in the hands of the enemy."

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

COMMUNICATION FROM SECRETARY OF WAR.

WAR DEPARTMENT, U. S. A.,
Richmond, Dec. 3, 1864.

To the President of the Confederate States:

SIR: I have received the following resolution of the House of Representatives, referred by your Excellency to this department:

"Resolved, That the President of the Confederate States, if not incompatible with the public interest, cause to be communicated to this House the nature and extent of any arrangement which may have been made by the Quartermaster General or any other agent or officer of the Government, for the relief of our soldiers who are prisoners of war in the hands of the enemy."

In response, I have the honor to transmit herewith a report from the Agent of Exchange, conveying the information called for by the House.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

JAMES A. SEDDON,
Secretary of War.

REPORT OF THE AGENT OF EXCHANGE.

RICHMOND, Va., Dec. 3, 1864.

Hon. JAMES A. SEDDON,
Secretary of War:

SIR: In the matter of the accompanying resolution of the House of Representatives, I have the honor to make the following report.

The accompanying papers, marked respectively from No. 1 to No. 9, inclusive, are copies of the correspondence in relation to the subject-matter of the resolution, and show what an "arrangement" has been made.

Orders were sent, some time since, to Mobile for the delivery of the cotton, and I hope it will soon reach its destination, if it has not already done so. The Northern journals state that General Beale has already been paroled for the purpose of discharging the duties assigned to him.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

RO. OULD,
Agent of Exchange.

[No. 1.]

FROM MR. OULD TO MAJOR MULFORD.

C. S. A., WAR DEPARTMENT, }
Richmond, Va., Oct. 6, 1864. }

Major JOHN E. MULFORD,
Assistant Agent of Exchange:

SIR: As it appears to be more than probable that a large number of prisoners will be held in captivity by both belligerents during the coming winter, the cause of humanity to which, though foes, we all owe a common allegiance, demands that some measure should be adopted for the relief of such as are held by either party. To that end, I propose that each Government shall have the privilege of forwarding for the use and comfort of such of its prisoners as are held by the other, necessary articles of food and clothing. The manner of their distribution, with all proper safeguards, can be agreed upon in the future. A fair reciprocity is only asked.

The articles that can be mutually sent can also be made the subject of agreement. I propose that each may send necessary clothing and blankets, and rations of meat, bread, coffee, sugar, tobacco, pickles and vinegar. I would suggest that the receipt of the stores and their distribution amongst the prisoners for whom they are intended, might

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be authenticated by the certificate of the senior officer at the respective camps or depots.

In order to carry out this arrangement with effectiveness, it would be necessary that we should make purchases outside the limits of the Confederate States, and then ship them to one of your ports. It would be impracticable to send the stores by one of your flag of truce boats.

Of course the supplies referred to in this communication are to be considered as being in addition to such rations as are furnished by the Government which has the prisoners in custody. Neither belligerent is to be discharged from the obligation of feeding and clothing the prisoners in its charge.

This is a matter of such grave importance, that I sincerely trust an early and favorable response will be made.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

RO. OULD,
Agent of Exchange.

[No. 2.]

FROM MR. OULD TO HON. E. M. STANTON.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, }
 War Department,
Richmond, Va., October 7, 1864. }

Hon. EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War:

SIR: On the 6th instant, I addressed the accompanying letter to Major John E. Mulford, Assistant Agent of Exchange. I think it proper to notify you that I have done so, in order that you may be made acquainted, at an early date, with the views of the Confederate authorities in relation to the matters to which that communication refers.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

RO. OULD,
Agent of Exchange.

[No. 3.]

FROM GENERAL U. S. GRANT TO GENERAL R. E. LEE.

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES, }
 October 18, 1864. }

General R. E. LEE,
Commanding Army of Northern Virginia:

GENERAL: The accompanying are copies of letters addressed by

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Judge R. Ould, Commissioner for the Exchange of Prisoners of War, to the Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War, and to Lieutenant Colonel J. E. Mulford, Assistant Commissioner of Exchange. I have been authorized by the Secretary of War to make such arrangements as can be agreed upon for the mutual relief of prisoners held by the two parties. In the propositions submitted by Judge Ould I see no one thing to object to. I shall be perfectly willing to receive, at any place held by Federal troops, all clothing or delicacies sent for the use of prisoners in our hands, provided the same privilege is extended for supplying the wants of those held by Confederate authorities. No objection will be urged to receiving supplies, for like distribution, at any of our northern ports, direct from Europe, or to allowing purchases in northern cities for the same purpose. I would suggest, however, as a means of satisfying each party that all goods sent reach their proper destination, that a commissioned officer of each party, to be selected from the prisoners of war, be paroled, to remain within the lines of the party now holding them, whose duty it shall be to receive and receipt for all articles sent for distribution, and who shall see that they are distributed according to the wishes of those sending.

Looking entirely to the alleviation of the sufferings of those held in captivity, I will not interpose any obstacle to any plan that may be proposed which gives equal privileges to both belligerents.

I am, General, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT,
Lieutenant General.

[No. 4.]

FROM GENERAL R. E. LEE TO GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, 7
October 19, 1864. }

Lieutenant General U. S. GRANT,
Commanding Armies of the United States:

GENERAL: I have received your letter of the 18th instant, accompanying copies of letters from Judge Ould, Commissioner of Exchange of Prisoners, on the part of the Confederate States, and the Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War, and Lieutenant Colonel Mulford, Assistant Commissioner of Exchange of the United States.

I understand your letter to be an acceptance of the general proposition submitted by Judge Ould, for the relief of the prisoners held by both parties, and shall transmit it to him, that arrangements may be made for carrying it into effect. The necessary details will be submitted to you, through Colonel Mulford, for agreement.

In order to simplify the matter, and to remove, as far as possible,

causes of complaint, I suggest that the articles sent by either party should be confined to those necessary for the comfort and health of the prisoners, and that the officer selected from among them to receive and distribute the articles should be given only such a parole, while so engaged, as to afford him the necessary facilities to attend properly to the matter.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,

General.

[No. 5.]

FROM GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL LEE.

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES, {

October 20, 1864. }

General R. E. LEE, C. S. A.,

Commanding Army of Northern Virginia:

GENERAL: Your letter of yesterday, accepting the terms offered for the mutual relief of prisoners of war held by each party, is received. Your understanding of my proposition is perfectly correct. I have no objection to limiting the articles to be sent to simple necessities, or to extending as much as you will agree to. It is my desire that all prisoners of war should be made as comfortable as it is possible for persons under restraint to be, and I will favor any proposition looking to that end.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT,

Lieutenant General.

[No. 6.]

FROM MR. OULD TO GENERAL GRANT.

RICHMOND, VA., October 30th, 1864.

Lieutenant General U. S. GRANT, U. S. A.:

SIR: I beg leave respectfully to inquire whether the United States authorities will consent to a shipment of cotton from one of our ports to one of the Northern cities, with the view of purchasing there, with the proceeds of sale, blankets, etc., for the immediate relief of our prisoners confined in Northern prisons. Of course we would

give you due notice of the name of the vessel carrying the cargo, as well as the time of her sailing, together with such other particulars as you might request.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
RO. OULD,
Agent of Exchange.

[No. 7.]

FROM GENERAL GRANT TO MR. OULD.

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES, }
November 6th, 1864. }

Judge ROBERT OULD,

Agent of Exchange:

SIR: Your communication, of the 30th October, inquiring whether the United States authorities will consent to a shipment of cotton from a Southern port to a Northern city, with the view of purchasing blankets, etc., for the immediate relief of prisoners, etc., is just this moment received. I hasten to reply to send back by the same messenger who brought yours.

I would propose that the United States authorities send a vessel to receive the cotton at any place you may designate, between the lines of the two parties, and ship it to such Northern city as you may designate.

A Confederate prisoner of war will be allowed to accompany the vessel going after the cotton, and to stay with it until it is sold. He will also be allowed to make the purchases with the proceeds and distribute them. A commissioned United States officer will accompany the officer selected by you during the whole of this transaction.

This much I can answer without referring to higher authority. If it is insisted on that a Southern vessel is to run from a Southern to a Northern port direct, I will have to refer the matter to the Treasury Department, for the views of the President.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
(Signed) U. S. GRANT,
Licutenant General.

[No. 8.]

FROM MR. OULD TO GENERAL GRANT.

RICHMOND, VA., November 11th, 1864.

Lieutenant General U. S. GRANT, U. S. A.:

SIR: Your communication of the 6th instant, in reply to mine of the 30th ultimo, has been received.

The Confederate Government will deliver on board one of your vessels, near Mobile, one thousand bales of cotton, to be forwarded to the city of New York, and there sold, the proceeds to be applied to the benefit of our prisoners, in accordance with the recent agreement. The cotton will be ready to be delivered within a week. Whenever the Federal vessel is ready to receive it, notification can be given to Major General Maury, commanding at Mobile.

I venture to suggest some details, all of which, I believe, are in accordance with the tenor of your letter of the 6th instant.

1. Major General Trimble, now at Fort Warren, has been selected as the Confederate officer to whom the consignment shall be made, at New York, who will there make the necessary and proper arrangements for the sale of the cotton and the purchase of the articles needed by our prisoners. In the event of the disability of Major General Trimble, Brigadier General William W. R. Beale is designated as his alternate. The selected officer shall be put on such a parole as will enable him to discharge the duties assigned to him with facility and effectiveness.

2. Such officer shall be allowed to make his purchases at those points where they can be made with the greatest advantage.

3. As the Confederate Government proposes to forward, without charge, such supplies as you may send for the relief of your prisoners, we take it for granted that the cost of transportation from the place of purchase will be borne by the United States Government. The officer selected by us will make all necessary arrangements for such transportation.

4. The reception of the supplies, and their subsequent distribution amongst the prisoners on both sides, shall be certified by a committee of officers confined in the prisons so supplied. Such a parole will be given to such officers as will enable them to carry out this agreement with due facility. They will report, through the proper agents, their proceedings to their respective governments.

5. Receipts will be given when the cotton is delivered on board your vessel, and a bill of lading forwarded to Major General Trimble, or his alternate.

6. I will thank your authorities to furnish to General Trimble, or his alternate, as near as may be, the number of prisoners confined in your respective prisons, in order that he may duly apportion the supplies. Similar information as to our prisons will be furnished whenever it is asked.

I trust that these details will be agreeable to you. If they are found to be inconvenient or defective, they can be amended by the consent of both parties.

I will thank you for a reply to this communication at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. O. OULD,
Agent of Exchange.

[No. 9.]

FROM GENERAL GRANT TO MR. OULD.

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES, }
November 12th, 1864. }

Judge ROBERT OULD,

Agent of Exchange:

SIR: Your communication of yesterday is received. All that you ask will be complied with. I will send instructions immediately to the Federal commander in Mobile bay, to notify General Maury of his readiness to receive and ship to New York city one thousand bales of cotton, to be consigned to one of the parties you name, who shall have every facility asked by you.

My instructions in this matter will have to go by way of Washington and New York cities, and may be ten days in reaching their destination.

All shipments of clothing, provisions, etc., for distribution among prisoners of war, will be sent from the place of purchase to the point of delivery free of charge, as you suggest.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

(Signed)

U. S. GRANT,

Lieutenant General.

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